

vision in the act which increased the capital of the bank,^a that the bank should surrender its monopoly outside the circuit of fifty Irish miles from Dublin. Companies of more than six partners were henceforth authorized to do a banking business and to issue circulating notes outside the proposed limit. A party of English capitalists determined to take advantage of this provision and at a meeting in London on June 11, 1824, resolved to found a bank with a capital of £2,000,000 in shares of £100 each, of which one-fourth was to be paid up. Subscriptions were received far beyond the amount needed before the end of the year and the capital of the Provincial Bank of Ireland, which was thus established, has never been increased except in 1836, when £40,000 was transferred to the capital from the "rest" or reserve fund. The monopoly enjoyed by the Bank of Ireland in Dublin made it necessary to keep the head office of the new bank in London, but an agency was established in Dublin and Messrs. La Touche and Company acted as agents until 1838, when the bank opened its own office.

The Provincial Bank rapidly extended its branches throughout Ireland, establishing them at Cork, Limerick, Clonmel, and Londonderry in 1825; at Sligo, Wexford, Belfast, Waterford, and Galway in 1826, and at other towns in successive years. The Bank of Ireland, which had been content with its head office until it found competitors in the field, began a policy of opening branches and established them, at Cork, Waterford, Clonmel, Londonderry, Newry, Belfast, and Westport almost as soon as the prospectus of the Provincial Bank had appeared. They began an action of law against the Provincial Bank in December, 1828, because of the payment of the latter's notes in Dublin. The jury found in favor of the Bank of Ireland upon the law and the evidence, but awarded damages at sixpence, with costs of a like amount, as evidence of the feeling in the business community of Dublin against the narrow policy of the bank. The restiveness of the merchants was further indicated in a petition to the Lords of the Treasury for the establishment

^a2 George IV., c. 72.